

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
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CaseID: 18277

Date: Thursday June 02, 2022
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Interim Comment

In terms of Section 38(3), 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Oryx Solar Power Plant (Pty) Ltd.

The activities entail the development of photovoltaic solar facility and associated infrastructure on Portion 2 of the Farm Kalkoenkrans 225, Registration Division Theunissen, situated within the Matjhabeng Local Municipality area of jurisdiction. The town of Virginia is located approximately 10km north east of the proposed development. The project entails the generation of up to 150MW electrical power through photovoltaic (PV) panels. The total footprint of the project will approximately be 252 hectares (including supporting infrastructure on site) that is located within the larger 311 hectares to be assessed. The property on which the facility is to be constructed will be leased by Oryx Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd from the property owner, for the lifespan of the project (minimum of 20 years).

Oryx Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd appointed Environamics Environmental Consultants to undertake the Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the proposed development of a photovoltaic solar facility and associated infrastructure on Portion 2 (Beverley) of the Farm Kalkoenkrans No. 225, in Viljoenskroon, within the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Free State Province.

The Draft Scoping Report has been submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA No. 107 of 1998) and the NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). The project entails the generation of up to 150MW electrical power through photovoltaic (PV) panels. The total footprint of the project including the associated infrastructure will be approximately be 256 hectares. The grid connection infrastructure includes a 132kV power line with a 100 to 250m wide grid corridor.

SAHRA issued an interim comment dated 07/03/2022 which requested the submission of the HIA inclusive of an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) and Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA). The studies were subsequently submitted on the 06/05/2022.

J A van Schalkwyk Heritage Consultant and Banzai Environmental were appointed to provide heritage specialist input as part of the EIA process as required by section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(3) and 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA).



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van Schalkwyk, J. A. 2022. Phase 1 Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment: The Proposed Nyarhi Solar Power Plant Near Viloenskroon, Free State Province.

A grave site of more than 50 graves was identified in the western boundary of the development area. Most of the graves are marked with stone cairns and a few with headstones with inscriptions. The area is covered with tall and dense vegetation and an exact count of the graves could not be done.

Recommendations and Mitigation measures proposed:

Once the developer has decided on a final layout, the vegetation cover is manually removed from the burial site in order to determine its exact size and the number of graves located in it.

Avoidance/Preserve: If it is decided to retain the burial site, and its exact size has been determined it should be fenced off permanently by means of a wire fence or brick wall, with a buffer zone of at least 100m.

Relocation of graves: This option can be implemented with additional design and construction inputs. This is appropriate where development occurs in a context of heritage significance and where the impact is such that it can be mitigated. Mitigation is to excavate the site by archaeological techniques, document the site (map and photograph) and analyse the recovered material to acceptable standards. This can only be done by a suitably qualified archaeologist. This option should be implemented when it is impossible to avoid impacting on an identified site or feature.

Butler, E. 2022. Palaeontological Impact Assessment For The Development of The Nyarhi Solar Power Plant Near Viljoenskroon, Free State Province.

The study area is underlain by alluvium, colluvium and eluvium as well as the Balfour Formation of the Adelaide Subgroup (Beaufort Group, Karoo Supergroup). A field survey was undertaken and no fossiliferous outcrops were detected in the development footprint. Low palaeontological significance has been allocated to development area with the exception of the Adelaide Subgroup, which is of very high palaeontological sensitivity. As such, the Chance Find Protocol must be adhered to.

Recommendations

- The ECO must be made aware that the Adelaide Subgroup (Beaufort Group, Karoo Supergroup) has a Very High Palaeontological Significance.
- If Palaeontological Heritage is uncovered during surface clearing and excavations the Chance Find Protocol, attached, should be implemented immediately. Fossil discoveries ought to be protected and

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the ECO/site manager must report to South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (Contact details: SAHRA, 111 Harrington Street, Cape Town. PO Box 4637, Cape Town 8000, South Africa. Tel: 021 462 4502. Fax: +27 (0)21 462 4509. Web: www.sahra.org.za) so that mitigation (recording and collection) can be carried out.

- Before any fossil material can be collected from the development site the specialist involved would need to apply for a collection permit from SAHRA. Fossil material must be housed in an official collection (museum or university), while all reports and fieldwork should meet the minimum standards for palaeontological impact studies proposed by SAHRA (2012).
- These recommendations should be incorporated into the Environmental Management Programme for the Oryx Solar Power Plant.

Interim Comment

The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology, Meteorite (APM) and the Burial Grounds and Graves (BGG) Units note that the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) report and the Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) report along with recommendations provided therein.

Further comments will be issued upon the submission of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) document and its appendices.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

Sityhilelo Ngcatsha
Archaeology, Palaeontology, Meteorite Assistant
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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Phillip Hine
Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:
Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/594853>